GOODWILL MESSAGE TO THE AWOLOWO FOUNDATION ON ITS 2ND EDITION OF THE OBAFEMI AWOLOWO PRIZE FOR LEADERSHIP AWARD

Chief Obafemi Awolowo’s feat in good governance and sound leadership was buttressed by the former Western Region’s relative advancement in all indices of human development: in socio-economic development, material prosperity and the pursuit of the egalitarian ideal. Subsequent inability of successive governments in Nigeria, either to match or improve on the late sage’s record of achievement – in any field of human development – made a compelling argument not only for the employment of his brand of governance specialism but, for the criticality of transformational leadership and good governance to a sound national economy and viable political entity.

In these days of the bastardization of the core essence of Awolowo’s political philosophy for electoral advantage, I congratulate the Awolowo Foundation on both its second edition of the Obafemi Awolowo Prize for Leadership Award and again, for instituting a credible and noble barometer in the search for a culture of sustainable political governance through competent and visionary leadership. This, I hope, will not only be motivational to the awardees but, serve to further entrench one of society’s more enduring values: the correlation of manifest excellence with recognition and reward.

The recipient of this biennial and 2nd Award is a South African politician, Thabo Mvuyelwa Mbeki, who served nine years – June 1999 to September 2008 – as the second post-apartheid President of South Africa under whose tenure, the economy of South Africa grew by 4.5% and a fast-growing black middle class was created with the implementation of his administration’s Black Economic Empowerment (BEE). I therefore, salute the informing choice of the Foundation and congratulate the worthy recipient.

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